

Sunday, February 14, 2016

Wheel Easy Ride Report 511

Medium Ride

Despite the frosty conditions and all led rides being cancelled, Gordon and I decided to carry on to Boroughbridge along a slightly shorter route than originally planned avoiding the smaller back roads which may have been icy.

We left Hornbeam with three or four other riders and on down to Low Bridge in Knaresborough. While we were stopped there we were joined by several more riders and eventually had a group of fifteen which was probably more than we have had for weeks.

On to Farnham, Stavely and Minskip and our group began to disintegrate again until we arrived in Boroughbridge with only about eight riders. At this point Gordon left us to return to Harrogate leaving the remaining few to stop for refreshments.

By the time we left Boroughbridge to return via Aldborough and the Dunsforths there were some ominous black clouds gathering but apart from the odd flurry of snowflakes we were lucky to avoid anything more serious. The road to Lower Dunsforth was pleasantly traffic and ice free with only the odd walker and cyclist to be seen. Our return through Arkendale and Knaresborough saw the sky gradually darkening but we arrived back just before it started to rain and sleet. The ride turned out to be better than expected with no problems with ice and everyone seemed glad to have risked it. Andrew H

Medium Plus Ride

Having decided not to lead the Med Plus ride, I set off in front of a fair sized tail of riders away from the planned route across the frozen lowlands towards the largely ice-free hills west of Harrogate. Pete had endured a busy week at Betty's, icing Valentine's Day messages on to chocolate hearts and some of these were just too rude to publish on this website - and could put you off chocolate for life. Amazingly, several riders had never ascended the full length of Brackenthwaite/Briscoe Rigg Lane - so a Greatest Climb ticked off for them! The Otley/Beckwithshaw Road was relatively clear of traffic, except that James almost got a ride on the passenger seat of a Maserati - good choice of marque, though.

We descended on quieter roads to the bridge at Farnley Fish Nursery (used to feature in Emmerdale Farm) and after climbing the other side even more riders admitted to never having been up 'that hill' - and it is unexpectedly steep even for those of us who had been that way before. In Otley, we split into two groups (luckily we had even numbers).

Group 1

My group, Group 1, (not that I was leading) WALKED our bikes through the park and over the footbridge and out onto the Pool road via the new housing estate - eventually a riverside cycle way will be built all the way to Dunne's ex-cafe.

At Pool, James and Paul headed for some refreshment and four of us headed for some more pain up Old Pool Bank, then via Bramhope and King Lane to Eccup. Two Leeds-ites broke off there, and Alan and I climbed a few more hills via Kirby Overblow and Pannal before we too split at the Cricket Ground. Alan reckoned about 2500 ft. of climbing in a 29 mile ride - which is quite a lot really. The meandering and non-leading resulted in quite a nice route - providing you like hill-climbs! To cap it all I was able to give a personal ride report to Gia as we crossed on her way back from a ramble to Fodder.

'One of the most enjoyable non-leading events I have ever done' Well done WE stalwarts. Peter L

Group 2

Group 2 (comprising Dave and Monica, Michael Inglis plus one Mark and a Paul) heading for the joys of Cockpit Farm. Combinations of baked beans, scrambled eggs and bacon were consumed with relish before heaving ourselves back in to the saddle to return via Askwith and the reservoirs. Despite the cold, the sunshine on our backs and clear views lifted everyone's spirits and on the final descent after Stainburn Forest you could see across the Vale of York to the Cleveland Hills where menacing little snow showers were forming. We had unleashed the young fast boys by this point and Dave kindly escorted Monica and me back to the fringes of Harrogate with the sun still shining. This was one of the best winter days out of the season - good decision Pete! I did drive back to Wetherby in a snow shower though but by then it didn't matter. Helen T



Long Ride

Sssshhhhhh – top secret- the long ride happened. After John's motivational speech 11 riders gathered together to not go on a ride to the Glider club café. The route was amended (for most of us) to miss out Easingwold in the vain hope that we might miss the snow forecast for the afternoon. So we trundled along to Boroughbridge and Kilburn for the stinging ascent of White Horse Bank. Some rode, some walked – it makes very little difference you still arrive at a fine café with spectacular views. Lunch was the usual convivial affair, spirits were high after a fine bright morning. Unfortunately the snow started to fall during lunch and continued all the way back to Boroughbridge. Peter Bradley did an excellent job on the front acting as a snow plough. Heading back to Harrogate the sun came out again – perhaps we should have stayed put! 60 miles, chilly. Phil S

